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Ma. Patricia Holt, Book Review Editor
The San Francisco Chronicle
San Francisco CA 94100

Dear Ms. Holt:

Because of all the many reviews I've been sent of what is really Mailer's Tales and because you have been slightly critical of the content of the book as others have not been, I take time of which I now have so little from the work on which I have been long engaged to suggest to you that with clearly good intention you fell far short of what I prefer to believe you would have done.

Please excuse my typing. It cannot be any better. I'm 82, in impaired health and limited in many ways. I am trying to perfect the record for history as best I can.

I am alone among those writing about the JFK assassination and its investigation who has never advanced any theories of the assassination and who has restricted himself to the official evidence. And that from the record is what book review editors, along with all the rest of the major media, simply will not touch. I'm not a practicing amateur shrink like Mailer so I offer no explanation. But it is a fact. For example, the first of my Whitewash series, which was the first of the books on the subject, neither you, the Chronicle nor any other major paper reviewed. Nor any of mine that followed. Yet of all those hundreds, if not thousands, of whom I have written critically, not one has written or phoned to complain that I treated him unfairly or was inaccurate. And as the back cover of my current book, for which from the record I still expect no review, it is a fact what the Department of Justice said in defending the FBI in that particular one of a dozen or so of my FOIA lawsuits. In them I brought to light about a third

a million pages of once-withheld records. The DJ did say that. Copy on request.

When I met Mailer in 1973 I offered him the same unrestricted and unsupervised access to all the records I have. He said it was interesting and he'd think it over. I've not heard from him since. I've also not heard from him or from his assistant when I asked if it were not a fact that, rather than merely being invited by the Minsk KGB to see its Oswald file, Larry Schiller, in accord with a long past of it, did not buy those rights from the KGB. I do not expect any response. Mailer knew exactly what he was doing and he fully expected, with reason, the almost entirely uncritical reception his most deliberately and yes, quite incompetent book would receive. I have dealt with extensive dishonesty and corruption on this subject for more than 30 years and Mailer's is more wretchedly bad these ways than any other. The competition for that distinction is stiff.

What simply astounds me is that all of you blandly accept his statement of his position and concept of the book that it makes no difference if Oswald ^{not} were guilty.

You quote him as saying, "Let's forget the evidence," as saying he will "not concern" himself with such things as "ballistics." He is more explicit elsewhere. You also quote, "The question is not whether Oswald had the skills to bring off the deed but whether he had the soul of the killer." Not one of you commented on this. Nor did any of you wonder how many we have wandering around with the soul of a killer - and killed nobody.

Mailer has from the first assumed Oswald's guilt. He still has nothing but his assumption. This is why he forgets the ballistics or, as he told the Philadelphia Inquirer, he avoids the evidence because it is "impenetrable" to him. But not to others and not to me in all my books. Which he seems not to have read in basing so much on a couple of deplorably bad works of sycophancy.

Yet if he had looked at my first book, of 1965 he would have found citation to the Warren Commission published evidence about which with such uninhibited dishonesty he bent your ear.

The plain and simple truth is that the very best shots in the country, under vastly improved conditions in all respects, in testing for the Commission were not able, not one of them, to duplicate the shooting attributed to Oswald who was officially rated by the Marines, and I published this in facsimile, as "a rather poor 'shot'."

So Mailer had to assume Oswald's guilt and keep himself ignorant of the official proof that he was not guilty, despite the official misrepresentation of that. (You can find more on this and on those tests in my current book.)

(I explain the format of my earlier books. I had over 100 international rejections without a single adverse editorial comment before I decided to open the subject by self-publishing. That book in that form remains the basic available book on the subject. That was the only way we could afford to do the book. And in thousands of unsolicited letters I recall not a single complaint about it.)

And so it was Mailer devotes himself to "motive," which he makes up, because he did not come back from Minsk with the "secrets" he expected of the KGB.

You are more than merely correct in noting Mailer's obsession with sex. He and Schiller have been commercializing it for years, along with the necrology they share. You quote Mailer as saying that Marina "had gone to a few wild parties," a dubious interpretation of what his book says, but "had done only what 9 out of 10 American girls do."

Too bad you did not compare that with what he does to ruin Marina's reputation when she is a grandmother.

His ong source on her "sleeping around" is the Yuri you refer to. But he did more than that. He was in fact the only source Mailer had for saying repeatedly that she had been expelled from Leningrad for being a whore. Which

Mailer knew was false, as his book says and I enclose. Moreover, he also knew and says that Yuri was a "prodigious liar" also enclosed. And the one man in Minsk said to have slept with her denied it.

And all the reviews and attention to this most disgusting of corrupt and dishonest of assassination books (which it also is not) merely call attention to this indecent condemnation of the innocent and decent woman who is also a victim of the assassination. And as a practical matter there is nothing she can do about it.

The attitude these sexist pigs, which may defame pigs, have toward women and sex is medieval. In sex men "have" women. What is right for men is wrong for women. In sex, too, women are the property of man. And obviously, what is wrong for women is right for men.

Mailer knew that Marina was put out of his home by her stepfather because a man had sent her flowers!

He knew that the only thing untoward in her life in Leningrad was being raped. His source, as his page I enclose says, is the woman who, not telling Marina, sold her to an Afghan who raped her. Yet Mailer spends much of two whole chapters and occasional mentions elsewhere based on the Yuri fabrication that she was expelled for being a whore and only her uncle (who was not in the equivalent of the FBI but was an engineer in the equivalent of the Department of the Interior) and his position kept her from the gulags over it!

It is a great national tragedy, I think, that in the wake of so great a tragedy book reviewers will give space and attention to the most disgusting and disgracefully "safe" books that support the official mythology but ignore, as you have, works on them that are factual, are based on the official evidence and thus are unwelcome to most and to all major publishers and do not get published by minor ones with ease at all.

If our representative society is to function it requires that on major issues the people be at least adequately informed. That has not happened with the JFK assassination and its official investigation. Perhaps book-review editors have more than policy to contend with when the ads come from the major publishers like Random House.

The people and the system suffer for it and, unfortunately, it is symptomatic rather than an exception.

You say what is true and is in fact praise, it being that much worse, that Mailer "offers nothing original." Yet look at the space and attention you gave it. And please think of those books that are not accompanied by major ads and give the other side and cannot get a review. Or the people who depend on reviews are kept in ignorance of them.

If you saw the perhaps 500 letters I got from Case Open, without a single promotion, review or ad, you'd know that the people are hungry for and appreciative of books that are entirely factual, theorize no conspiracies and are based on the official evidence that is "impenetrable" to the literary whores like Mailer who could not write a thing or get published if they even look at it, the evidence of the crime.

I'm grateful that you had at least a few critical and truthful comments on Mailer's consummate indecency. I regret ^{there} ~~that~~ is little chance people will ever be told the truth. Marina at least had a little spunk. She told Schiller and Mailer that for the five days of their interview of her they were "sex deviates." They were worse.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg